

NORTH CAROLINA'S ADOPT-A-TRAIL GRANT PROGRAM GENERAL INFORMATION

QUICK FACTS ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA'S ADOPT-A-TRAIL GRANT PROGRAM

Source of Funds:	North Carolina General Fund
Acronym:	AAT
AAT Annual Appropriation:	\$108,000 for the State
Permissible Uses:	New Trail Construction Trail Renovation Trail Side Facilities Land Acquisition (Willing Sellers Only)
Grants Available to:	Governmental Agencies Non-profit Organizations
Maximum Grant Amount:	\$5,000
Grants Awarded in 2009:	25 Applicants Funded Totaling \$108,000
Number of Applications Received:	36 Applications Totaling \$171,000
Application Cycle:	Applications Available November 1, 2009 Application Deadline January 29, 2010
Match Requirement:	No match required
Contact:	Contact your Regional Trails Specialist or Grants Manager
Contact List:	http://www.ncparks.gov/About/trails_contacts.php

STATE ENABLING LEGISLATION – ADOPT-A-TRAIL GRANT PROGRAM

The State Adopt-A-Trail Grant Program was authorized in 1987 by the North Carolina General Assembly as General Statute 113A-92.1 Adopt-A-Trail Program, with the following mandate:

“The Department shall establish an Adopt-A-Trail Program to coordinate with the Trails Committee and local groups or persons on trail development and maintenance. Local involvement shall be encouraged, and interested groups are authorized to “adopt-a-trail” for such purposes as placing trail markers, trail building, trail blazing, litter control, resource protection, and any other activities related to the policies and purposes of this Article.”

PERMITTED USES OF AAT GRANT FUNDS

- Trail brochures, website information, promotional media
- New trail construction
- Repair/renovation of trails
- Trail head or trail side facilities items included: horse tie-racks, bike racks, ORV loading ramps, canoe access points, and trail-head parking
- Rental of trail construction and maintenance tools and equipment
- Acquisition of construction and maintenance equipment with unit value less than \$500 each and equipment rental fees
- Engineering studies and/or environmental studies, provided that these services are required by the appropriate land managing agency in order to complete a trail or trail segment (this requirement must be in writing from the appropriate land managing agency and attached to the application).

NON-PERMITTED USES OF AAT GRANT FUNDS

- Park Entrance Signs
- Park Facilities including: picnic shelters, picnic tables, fitness trail equipment, and birding equipment
- Condemnation of any kind of interest in property
- Feasibility Studies

- Law Enforcement
- Roads
- Sidewalks

AAT Project Lands

North Carolina will award AAT grants to projects that are:

- On lands owned in fee simple or easements that are held in perpetuity by a governmental agency provided that the public is allowed use of the trail or facilities.
- On lands owned in fee simple or easements that are held in perpetuity by a non-profit organization provided that the public is allowed use of the trail or facilities.
- On lands that are leased by a governmental agency or non-profit organization for a minimum of 10 years.

Note: These are listed in priority order for evaluation and funding recommendations.

Reimbursement Grant Program

The GRANTEE must finance 100% of the project costs. All eligible, incurred and documented expenditures will be refunded to the grantee, up to 90% of the total **AAT award amount**. The last 10% will be withheld until the project is complete, all records submitted, and a final site inspection has been completed. When all requirements have been met, the final 10% will be reimbursed.

Note: You must complete at least one of your defined project deliverables in order to request any reimbursement.

One Grant Per Agency

Only one grant will be awarded to a managing agency should sufficient applications be submitted to enable total allocation of AAT funds. This will help insure statewide distribution of funding. (For the purposes of this grant, a U.S. Forest Service District or a State Park is considered a managing agency.)

AAT APPLICATION REVIEW, SCORING AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Review of Application

All applications received on or before the application deadline will be reviewed by the appropriate Regional Trails Specialist to insure that an applicant has provided all required documentation.

The Regional Trails Specialist will assist applicants, if needed, to modify or correct your application.

Application Scoring Criteria

All applications will be scored using the AAT Scoring Criteria as follows:

1. **Ownership and management of land and/or trail project:**
 - a. Government Agency 4
 - b. Non-Profit Organization 2
 2. **Trail Project to accomplish:**
 - a. Trail brochures, website information, promotional media and trail signs 5
 - b. New trail construction projects 4
 - c. Trail renovation or restoration projects 3
 - d. Trail-side facilities 2
- Note:** An application requesting a combination of the above will be scored based upon the highest percentage of expenditures as noted in the project deliverable section of this application.
3. **Project provides linkage:**
 - a. State Trail Project 5
 - b. National Trail Project 4
 - c. Regional Trail Project 3
 - d. Joint City/County, County/County Trail Project 2
 - e. Local Trail Project 1
 - f. Park specific 0
 4. **Responsible Management Agency:**
 - a. Governmental Agency 3
 - b. Governmental Agency /NPO/Volunteers 2
 - c. NPO only 1
 5. **The trail will be open to the public:**
 - a. Open 7 days per week 3
 - b. Open limited hours per week 1

The point values will be totaled and the applications ranked according to score from high to low. This AAT Scoring Criteria will be used to initially evaluate and rank all applications received. Other funding criteria include: regional distribution of grant awards; and consideration of funding of projects that serve all trail user types.

North Carolina Trails Committee Review and Funding Recommendations

It is a duty of the North Carolina Trails Committee to review all applications received and to make AAT grant funding recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, who is authorized to award AAT grants.

The North Carolina Trails Committee will consider the following factors when making their AAT grant funding recommendations:

1. The score awarded to each applicant
2. Regional distribution of funds
3. Projects that serve all trail user types

Compliance with Environmental and Historical Rules and Regulations

All applications recommended for funding by the North Carolina Trails Committee will be forwarded for review by the Federal Highway Administration and the State of North Carolina for compliance with state and federal environmental and historical rules and regulations. Only grant applications that are found to be in compliance with these rules and regulations are eligible for AAT grant funding.

Notification of Grant Award

The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will send letters of award to applicants. This letter is simply notification that you have been awarded a AAT grant and that your application has now been forwarded to the Division of Purchase and Services for the award of a State Grant Contract.

Only after you have a fully executed copy of this grant contract can you begin work on your specific project for which you want reimbursement.

Award of State Grant Contracts

The Division of Purchase and Services is responsible for issuing State Grant Contracts. You will receive 4 paper copies of your State Grant Contract. These 4 copies are to be signed and returned to the Division of Purchase and Services for their signature.

Only after you have a fully executed copy of this grant contract can you begin work on your specific project for which you want reimbursement.

APPLICATION AND APPROVAL TIMELINE

Application Deadline – January 29, 2010

All electronic .pdf applications submitted by email before 11:59 p.m. on January 29, 2009 or mailed paper applications postmarked on or before Friday, January 29, 2010, will first be reviewed and evaluated by State Trails Program staff.

Application Review and Recommendation Meeting – April 2010

The North Carolina Trails Committee will meet in April to review all project descriptions and make final funding recommendations to the Secretary of DENR.

Environmental and Historical Reviews – May 2010

Grantee applications recommended for funding will be forwarded for review by the DPR Resource Management Section for compliance with the State's Environmental Protection Act; the FHWA for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act; and, the State Historic Preservation Office for compliance with the State Historic Preservation Act. This review process can take eight weeks or longer. Tentative clearance date is July 2010.

Secretary's Award Letter – July 2010

Applications found in compliance with environmental and historical reviews will be forwarded to the Secretary of DENR for review and approval. Grantees whose projects are selected for funding can expect an award letter from the Secretary in July 2010.

***Note:** This letter will be notification that your application has been approved for funding. A contract must be fully executed between the State and the Grantee before you are authorized to expend funds that you will want to be reimbursed as a part of this AAT Grant.*

Award of Contract – October 2010

All applications approved for funding (pending compliance with State and Federal environmental and historical rules and regulations) will be sent to the Division of Purchase and Services who will execute the individual grant contracts for signature. Contracts must be fully executed by all parties prior to expending any funds you will want to have reimbursed from 2010 AAT Funds. This process can take up to eight weeks to complete. Tentative date for issuance of contracts is October 2010.

STATE GRANT CONTRACT START AND END DATES

The State Grant Contract provides a grantee a start and ending date for a grant project.

The State will not reimburse a grantee for any project expenditures that are dated prior to the start date or after the contract ending date as noted in the contract document.

State Grant Contracts for AAT grants provide the grantee two (2) years to complete the project. A grantee may request up to a one year extension given sufficient reason.

2009 ADOPT-A-TRAIL GRANT PROGRAM GRANTS AWARDED

Click on the following link to download a listing of all applications received, a brief project description and amount of AAT grant award. ????????